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Pretty Soldier Sailor Zarmina



milsf

magicalgirl

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Chapter 1 by Harlander

The sky over Gliese 581g was filled with fire. Clouds of combat drones swarmed around the bulbous shapes of assault carriers. C-beams glinted against the backdrop of stars, sending explosions blooming in the darkness. The surface had not been spared. Already, wrecked tanks and shattered power armour littered the plains of its single large continent.

Colonel Ruben Vlahovic crouched behind the brow of a ridge, and released a scouting orb. It whizzed into the air, invisible lasers flicking out, cameras focussing. The miniature drone's tactical assessment appeared in his helmet display, troops and vehicles pointed out by a scattering of square and triangular icons.

The Hierarchy staging post buzzed with activity. A couple of squads of armoured infantry patrolled its perimeter, while hover tanks waited, each drawing charge in turn from a heavy mobile reactor. The biggest threat stood behind them - a giant, bipedal robot, two stories high, its head a stylised mask from ancient history. The air above them shimmered with sensor-confounding motes.

Vlahovic undipped a laser relay from his belt, flicking it to extend its monopod before driving its spike into the ground to hold it in place. He scanned the sky for a moment before fixing on the Commonality's command ship. An inkblot of a ship heaved in Vlahovic's ears as the device announced itself to him.

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"Sunray, this is Pronto-five-alpha reporting, how copy?" The verbal callsigns were an ancient habit, obsolete given the electronic identification used everywhere, but retained to keep the human element in warfare.

"Pronto, Sunray. Link is good. Proceed"

"Target sighted. Uploading position data." Another shrill electronic twittering.

"Received. Return to base. Arcturus deployment in fifteen, repeat, fifteen seconds. Out."

The laser relay folded itself away, and Vlahovic stowed it away. A high-pitched whistling began, and the scout turned his eyes to the sky, looking towards the command ship. A thin line shone in the sky, twinkling in the colours of the rainbow. It grew as it drew closer, rushing through the air at fantastic speed. It shot overhead, and Vlahovic's helmet slowed down its rushing image as it passed over.

It was a young woman, flying head first through the sky, her arms stretched in front of her. The pleats of her long skirt, and the bright ribbons of her blouse, rippled in the furious turbulence of her passing. She flickered overhead in an instant, and for just that instance, Vlahovic caught her wink before she vanished over the ridge in the direction of the assembled Hierarchy troops.

Then the explosions began.

Chapter 2 by Harlander



"You did a good job today, Yuzuki!" Fifi chirped. The bright pink bird stood on the rim of the tub where Yuzuki lay, immersed up to her neck in soothing mint-green gel. Her injuries were healing already, but those x-ray laser burns still stung.

"A grav-tank platoon, two Elemental squads and a Gallardos-class assault frame!", Fifi went on, hopping closer to Yuzuki's face. She reached her hand out of the cool green goo, and brushed a finger over the long feather sprouting from the middle of the bird's forehead. "Those Hierarchy creeps will think twice before they mess with you again!"

Yuzuki closed her eyes and laughed. "In the name of Zarmina," she murmured. "I'll strike you down!" Maybe it wasn't a battle cry that would inspire the masses, but it was hers.

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She settled down into the cool green goo.

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Chapter 2 by Harlander



Hierarchy Command Ship *Hepsi Bir*, in orbit over Gliese 581g

Sector Commander Mümtaz Bartholomäus von Anka stared at the holographic projection that hovered in the centre of the command deck, his clenched fists quivering with rage. The moving image ran at half-speed, giving the events it showed a balletic quality.

Over and over, the tiny scene played out. A rapid rainbow-hued blur shot across the scene, scattering soldiers and vehicles alike. Bright tracer lines sketched across the holographic air as the Hierarchy troops struggled to shoot the swooping figure down. The bright lines of laser fire from the hover-tanks, and even the hulking Gallardos' plasma lance, stabbed across the image to no avail. A few clearly struck home, but they didn't seem to slow the blur one bit. It hovered in the air in front of the assault frame, and a broad beam in similar rainbow hues leapt out and struck the frame in the centre before the image collapsed into random noise before starting its silent loop again.

"What is the meaning of this humiliation?" von Anka bellowed, his otherwise neat face a furious red. "A whole combined-arms platoon wiped out, and by what?" He flicked his fingers towards the image, and it zoomed in on the deadly blur, resolving into a high-detail image of a young female face set in a determined expression. "Some kind of... flying *juvenile*?" His hand struck out in an accusatory jab that made his assembled staff flinch - his finger pointed at his advisor from the Hikmetim, the Hierarchy's state agency for scientific research. "I trust you have a satisfactory explanation for this, Üstâd-Colonel Bardakçı." he continued. It was fairly obvious from his tone that no explanation would prove satisfactory.

Bardakçı stammered. Her long robe hid the shaking of her hands, but the fear in her voice was evident. "It's some kind of new weapon system. An augmented individual..."

von Anka cut across her. "Yes. *Obviously*. Tell me something I couldn't see for myself."

Bardakçı's gaze swept everywhere but the Sector Commander's livid face. "We have very little to go on, Commander. All of our detailed sensor recordings were corrupted by the attack. Only

the visible light record has any kind of integrity, and that's what you see here." She paused for a moment's breath, until von Anka said, "See more of Story Wars

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It showed a primitive image, an animated drawing in a stylised scene of sharp, flat colours. A feminine figure, dressed similarly to the one that had so recently won an effortless defeat and outlined in a glowing nimbus of light, hovered before a crowd, her palms pressed together as if in prayer.

Bardakçı flexed her fingers again, and a crowd of still images slid out from behind the animation. Crowds of juveniles, all dressed in that same garment.

"We believe the attire is symbolic, uh, of youth and innocence," Bardakçı said lamely.

"Well, isn't that just *fascinating*," von Anka replied. His angry scowl hadn't shifted one bit. "I don't suppose the vast intellects of the Hikmetim managed to discover anything remotely tactically *useful*?"

Bardakçı winced, and her cowl wasn't enough to hide it. "We can determine very little from the available sensor information." *You try piecing together the specs of a totally unknown weapon from long-range video, you iğrenç tip*, she thought bitterly.

"If we could capture one of them, we'd stand a much better chance of finding out what makes them tick."

"Oh, really? And just how do you propose capturing something that cut through a platoon of our most advanced units like they were paper?"

"Well, we might have one idea..."

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